

INTRODUCTION:

OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF WAR

Course Overview

Introduction *Operational Level of War* (8803) introduces you to the art of war between the strategic and tactical levels. Although the course was designed from the Marine Corps perspective, it will often examine operations from other services or joint perspectives. The course emphasizes the importance of developing sound operational concepts and campaign plans in order to achieve national security objectives.

Relationship To Other Instruction A bridge between strategy and tactics, the operational level of war centers on designing and conducting campaigns.

At the upper end, the operational level of war interacts with strategy to create military **art** that

Designates military objectives that satisfy the desired strategic end state (ENDS)

Determines the appropriate method to achieve the designated objectives (WAYS)

Assigns forces and resources to the tasks to be accomplished (MEANS)

At the lower end, the operational level of war interacts with tactics through military **science**, including the use of forces, resources, and missions to culminate in military success.

Course Organization

Operational Level of War (8803) is organized in the following manner with respect to lessons, readings hours, issues hours, and total hours for the course.

Lesson	Reading Hours	Issues Hours	Total Hours	Page Number
Lesson 1: Overview: Operational Level of War	1	1	2	1-1
Lesson 2: Overview: Joint Doctrine	0.5	1	1.5	2-1
Lesson 3: Introduction To Joint Warfare	2.5	1	3.5	3-1
Lesson 4: Combatant Command Organization	2.5	1	3.5	4-1
Lesson 5: Joint Planning	1.5	1	2.5	5-1
Lesson 6: Deliberate Planning	2.5	1	3.5	6-1
Lesson 7: Crisis Action Planning	1.5	1	2.5	7-1
Lesson 8: Joint Task Force Organization	1.5	1	2.5	8-1
Lesson 9: Joint Task Force Operations	1	1	2	9-1
Lesson 10: The Joint Campaign	0.5	1	1.5	10-1
Lesson 11: Campaign Design	3	1	4	11-1
Lesson 12: Campaign Planning	2.5	1	3.5	12-1
Lesson 13: Service Doctrine: United States Marine Corps	0.5	1	1.5	13-1
Lesson 14: Service Doctrine: United States Navy	0.5	1	1.5	14-1
Lesson 15: Service Doctrine: United States Army	0.5	1	1.5	15-1
Lesson 16: Service Doctrine: United States Air	0.5	1	1.5	16-1
Lesson 17: Campaign Analysis: Persian Gulf War	25	1	26	17-1
Final Examination			2	
Total	47.5	17	66.5	

Reserve Retirement Credits

The total number of study hours required for this course, including the time for the comprehensive final examination is 66.5 hours. For reservists, inactive duty retirement credits are awarded for each 3 hours of study time. **The total number of reserve retirement credits awarded to reserve officers for completing this course is 22.**

Course Objectives

Purpose	<p><i>Operational Level of War</i> (8803) was designed to focus on the process that transforms strategic guidance into the employment of military forces at the operational level of war.</p> <p>National security operations should be coordinated from the highest level of policymaking (strategy) to the basic level of execution (tactics). The operational level of war forges the link between the two levels, providing direction and purpose to campaigns and other military operations.</p> <p>The goal of <i>Operational Level of War</i> (8803) is to provide the foundation necessary to determine</p> <p>How the organization for national defense influences the operational level of war</p> <p>How the joint planning systems help formulate and develop campaign plans to accomplish strategic objectives</p>
Distinctions	<p>Draw the distinctions among the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. Assess the responsibilities of the operational commander in relation to these distinctions.</p>
Methods Used By Operational Commander	<p>Analyze the methods the operational commander uses to achieve his objectives. Analyze some considerations in leading, planning, and executing a campaign.</p>
Evaluate the Operational Level of War	<p>Evaluate the definitions, doctrine, and principles of the operational level of war.</p>
Interaction of Military Objectives	<p>Distinguish between the ways strategy and the operational level of war interact and be able to synthesize broad strategic guidance into decisive, obtainable military objectives.</p>

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Course Objectives, Continued

**Interpret
Service and
Joint Doctrine**

Interpret service and joint doctrine as it relates to the systems, agencies, and command relationships involved in operational planning and execution.

**Evaluate at
the Operational
Level of War**

Evaluate the application of operational intelligence, fires, maneuver, command and control, protection, and logistics at the operational level of war.

**Historical
Case Study**

Analyze a case study to identify key relationships at the operational level of war.

Course Description

Introduction

Operational Level of War (8803) consists of 17 lessons, doctrinal publications, and selected readings that support each lesson.

The General's War. The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf, by Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, serves as the culminating text for the campaign analysis and the final examination.

A Link in the CSCDEP Curriculum

The *Operational Level of War* (8803) course links the curriculum of the Command and Staff College Distance Education Program (CSCDEP) with the *Strategic Level of War* (8802) and the remaining courses that cover the employment of Marine forces in joint and multinational environments. Intended to further develop your understanding of the role and mission of the Department of Defense in accomplishing national objectives, this course will provide a solid historical and theoretical foundation for completing the 8800 Program.

Course Themes

Running through this course are a number of themes that relate to other courses in the Command and Staff College Distance Education Program (CSCDEP). These themes include the following:

War is a national undertaking that must be coordinated from the highest levels of policymaking to the basic levels of execution.

The operational level of war provides direction and purpose to combat operations. Without the operational level of war, war is simply a series of disconnected battles and engagements.

The essence of the operational level of war is the formulation, design, and conduct of campaigns.

Course Readings

Required Readings

Some **required readings** are provided to you in the *Operational Level of War Readings* (8803). These include articles from various professional magazines, journals, as well as doctrinal publications reprinted in annexes. Each annex is referenced in the course according to its sequence in each lesson.

Other **required readings** of military publications are provided to you in either the *Joint Pub Readings* (8800); the *FM/FMFRP Readings* (8800); or the *FMFM Readings* (8800). Each reading is referenced under the section title "Required Readings" within each lesson.

The **required readings** provided to you with this course as separate publications are

- MCDP 1, *Warfighting*
 - MCDP 1-2, *Campaigning*
 - NDP-1, *Naval Warfare*
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Required Book

The following publication is also required reading, but is **not** provided with the course. You must purchase or otherwise obtain this book.

Gordon, Michael R. and Trainor, Bernard E. (Gen). *The General's War. The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf*. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1995.

Course Evaluation

Introduction	It is important to review the content of the material presented in <i>Operational Level Of War</i> (8803) to develop a personal understanding of how the Armed Forces, and especially the Marine Corps, functionally adapt to the new military demands for joint operations.
Examination	<p>The final requirement for <i>Operational Level of War</i> (8803) is a proctored, 2-hour, machine-graded, closed-book examination. There are 50 complex, multiple choice questions. The examination questions are drawn from information found in the Required Readings and lessons.</p> <p>This examination is content-based in nature; you should be very familiar with course content and subject matter both in preparing for the examination and in responding to the final examination items.</p> <p>There may be more than one answer that appears to be correct for a given item. You must choose the best answer.</p>
Student Questionnaire	The examination packet for this course includes a student questionnaire sheet. Please comment as the form instructs. Future changes in this course will be based, in part, on your comments and recommendations. Please complete the questionnaire and remember: What really helps for the future are <u>suggestions on how to do things better!</u>